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ABSTRACT

The Alternate Secondary Center (ASC) Program, is the latest step in a series of activities which have been taken to individualize prescriptive learning programs to meet the identified needs of alienated secondary school youngsters. As the external component to the chain of alternate secondary programs, Hartford's two ASC's focused on two operational concepts. (1) Each Center was staffed by one unit leader, five teachers, a secretary, and a paraprofessional. These instructional services were further supplemented by a half-time assignment of a social worker and a guidance counselor. With this staffing pattern, each ASC was set up to provide individualized instructional services to approximately 50 alienated youngsters enrolled in grades seven through 12. The instructional focus was on basic skill mastery and particularly language arts remediation, the development of a functional self-concept which would enable each youngster to succeed in a mainstream environment, and both vocational and career exploration. (2) Because regular school offerings had proven to be ineffective with the alienated youngster who produced symptoms of emotional and behavioral problems within his classroom, each ASC was held responsible for the identification, construction, piloting, and validation of individualized learning materials which would work. Return of youngsters to mainstream classes was resisted. (Author/JM)

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

ALTERNATE
SECONDARY
CENTERS

1973 - 1974

HARTFORD MOVES AHEAD

An Evaluative Report

VD 044 970

HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS·249 HIGH STREET·HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06103

ALTERNATE SECONDARY CENTERS
1973-1974

Hartford Public Schools
249 High Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

ALTERNATE SECONDARY CENTERS

Statement of Needs

The Alternate Secondary Center Program, or ASC as these centers are commonly called, is the latest step in a series of activities which have been taken to individualize prescriptive learning programs to meet the identified needs of alienated secondary school youngsters. Originally conceived as a "holding operation" for youngsters for whom continued high school enrollments were an impossibility, the overall alternate placement concept was developed over a five year period with the ASC representing only one link in the chain. And since an ASC is only one possible placement alternative, the potential array of available services could well be what is needed to permit a middle or high school youth to complete his education. Here he has a better chance for success than was available before.

As the external component to the chain of alternate secondary programs, Hartford's two ASC's focused on two operational concepts:

1. Each Center was staffed by 1 unit leader, 5 teachers, a secretary, and a paraprofessional. These instructional services were further supplemented by a half-time assignment of a social worker and a guidance counselor. With this staffing pattern, each ASC was set up to provide individualized instructional services to approximately 50 alienated youngsters enrolled in grades 7 through 12. Services were to be directed at a "zero reject" level under the assumption that if the system and not the child had failed, then obviously

youngsters were able to achieve but in another kind of learning environment. Thus the instructional focus was on basic skill mastery and particularly language arts remediation, the development of a functional self-concept which would enable each youngster to succeed in a mainstream environment, and both vocational and career exploration.

2. Because regular school offerings had proven to be ineffective with the alienated youngster who produced symptoms of emotional and behavioral problems within his classroom, each ASC was held responsible for the identification, construction, piloting, and validation of individualized learning materials which would work. These materials were to be used initially on a one-to-one basis up to the point where a transition could be made to small group and later larger group instruction. Further, provisions were to be made to involve ASC youngsters in special subject areas and in working experiences outside the school proper. Here the intent was to provide experiences which would help to mainstream the youngster as soon as it was humanly possible. And for the youngsters who could not return to the mainstream, centers are also designed to enable these youngsters to complete their formal education totally within an ASC.

Description

The ASC program as operated, differed somewhat from the planning

concept.

1. Although each center was designed to hetrogeneously group students in grades 7 through 12, differences in ages, achievement levels, and developmental needs created a number of problems. To correct these, the program coordinator queried each ASC parent by means of a questionnaire to determine whether a division into middle school and high school center levels was appropriate. Overwhelmingly, parents opted for this revision to the point that the program will be structured in this way during the coming year.
2. While the two ASC's were staffed according to pattern, the "zero reject" system could not be followed through. Project staff reported that attempts to involve ASC youngsters in special subject areas and in other activities within the schools proper were often resisted. Further, these kinds of experiences had to be provided either through tutors, volunteers, or on non-school sites to the point that special subject involvements, career and work activities calculated to aid in mainstreaming, and other social activities were effectively limited.
3. Return of youngsters to mainstream classes was also resisted. It was reported that only 7 youngsters were returned to their sending classrooms.
4. The concept still apparently persists on the part of some non-ASC people that ASC placement is intended as a terminal referral.

While some youngsters will complete their formal education in an ASC, these youngsters should be the exception rather than the rule, since the program is designed to return youngsters to the mainstream in the shortest time possible.

5. A new program, The Self-Contained Video Class, was established at the Harrambee Center. This program, which enhanced reading through the extensive use of dramas materials, role playing, debate, speech, announcing, and preparing commercials for use before the video camera served to stimulate and improve reading skills. A marked change in spelling using this technique was reported. Note here that this program facet was also individualized in that students had to learn how to operate and function both as individuals and within a group framework so as to accept the differences and uniquenesses of themselves.

In addition to the program deviations which were reported, the director in his annual report, also cited several major achievements:

1. The Alternate Secondary Centers' ability to function under the many diverse conditions faced this year was the major achievement. This could only be accomplished through a dedicated, hard working staff which insisted that the center would live and provide and education for students who had been turned-off with the mainstream school.

2. The first step of survival was to change the attitudes of the students enrolled. This was done by showing them they could be successful in both academic and social endeavors. Events of the change can be seen from the dropouts for 1973-74, only four (4) students or 4% of the total population discontinued their enrollment.

3. Academic achievement came through a series of mini courses and improved reading scores. These mini courses provide a great deal of academic and social independence and serve to foster the desired continuous investigation of many other academic areas.

In addition to the program strengths, some problems were also identified; several have been resolved by program modifications.

1. The major problem of housing 7-12 grade students in the same center has been resolved by separating the two centers on a grade level basis; 7-8 and 9-12.
2. Because there is still resistance on the part of sending schools to the return of ASC students on a part-time basis, special subject staffs assigned to the program would be desirable. Particularly needed are teachers in the areas of art, music, home economics, wood, and metal shop for middle school youngsters.
3. A need still exists to develop a closer working relationship with the high schools to make alternate educational experiences truly relevant for students in grades 9-12. Again, linkages between ASC's, ALC's, and mainstream programs would be highly desirable.
4. Because of the fact that many high school youngsters are potential dropouts with the concomitant social and economic pressures being built up, a full time social worker for the high school is recommended.
5. The director reported that additional equipment is needed to enlarge the video class at Harambee.
6. Few career development experiences were available because of the absence of staff, time, and facilities. In order to help ASC young-

sters become self-supporting and self-sufficient, the director recommended that a further emphasis be placed on locating skilled employment opportunities which might be available in the greater Hartford area. While more innovative areas of skill training are desirable, ultimate responsibility for the program is to give students a base upon which they can develop. Hence, the emphasis on skilled trades as a means of entry onto career ladders must be given priority.

Evaluation and Objectives

The conceptualization of the ASC evaluation was based on a number of program assumptions and trade-offs as these occurred over what was essentially a five year period. Initially it was thought that an individualized program for alienated youngsters could produce the **same** kinds of positive changes which were being evidenced in other programs, which met the test for individuality in learning. Here test criteria using month-for-month gains had logically been established. But while the first group of centers came close to the stated level of objective attainment, the impact of the various programs became somewhat diluted over the course of the years. This dilution was a result of several problems which involved the lack of a centralized coordination of placement, problems in organization, and staffing patterns which not only varied to some extent, but were not particularly in tune with the programs original conception.

Because of these and other organizational problems, the standard of month-for-month gains was felt to be at least partially inappropriate: instead a standard of month-for-month gains based upon the students previous levels of attainment was substituted. While this seemed a more logical criteria, unfortunately, little baseline data had been collected with the result being that virtually no comparisons could be made. The result was that while many discussions did take place regarding the appropriateness of either criterion, for practical reasons the month-for-month standard was retained.

Behavioral Objectives

1. Based upon the individual specification of a student's needs, an appropriate prescriptive educational program will be developed and administered over a differentially selected period of time. Upon completion of this individually prescribed program, the students will:

   a. Demonstrate on the Metropolitan Word Knowledge and Reading subscores at least month-for month gains when compared to their previous academic progress.

   b. On the Metropolitan Subtests of Arthmetic Computation and Problem Solving, students taking math will demonstrate at least month-for-month gains when compared to their previous academic progress.

2. As a group, Alternate Secondary Center students will demonstrate the following:

   a. Group attendance figures will equal average attendance figures for the seventh through twelfth grade levels in Hartford.

b. Attendance figures will exceed previous student patterns of attendance. Basis for comparison individual attendance figures for the preceding two school years, as obtained from student cumulative record folders.

3. As a group, Alternated Secondary Center students will demonstrate substantially improved self image and a more positive attitude toward others and toward their learning situation.

a. Based on pre and post student self evaluation inventories developed by Alternate Secondary Center Staff members, specific behavioral modifications which have occurred over the course of the instructional cycle will be reported.

b. A student rating scale will also be developed for use by staff to examine behavioral changes.

Evaluation

In order to tie evaluative data to the objectives and concepts written in the proposal, a series of questions were developed. These and some tentative answers have been reported as follows:

Question - Was an appropriate prescriptive educational program developed and administered over the period of time in which youngsters were in the ASC program? While no direct information could be reported, multiple criterion using four subtests of the metropolitan achievement test and the standard of month-for-month gains was submitted instead. These data are reported in Tables 1 through 4.

TABLE 1

Comparison of MAT Mean Word Knowledge Grade Equivalent Scores, by Program and by Center, School Year 1973-1974

Team	N	Pre test	Post test	Dif.	Sig.
ASC Program	23	5.1	5.6	+.5	.05
Bellevue ASC	16	4.3	4.8	+.5	.05
Harambee ASC	7	6.6	7.2	+.6	NS

TABLE 2

Comparison of MAT Mean Reading Grade Equivalent Scores, by Program and by Center, School Year 1973-1974

Team	N	Pre test	Post test	Dif.	Sig.
ASC Program	24	4.6	4.8	+.2	NS
Bellevue ASC	19	4.3	4.8	+.5	.01
Harambee ASC	5	5.8	4.8	-.1	NS

TABLE 3

Comparison of MAT Mean Arithmetic Computation Grade Equivalent Scores, by Program and by Center,

School Year 1973-1974

Team	N	Pre test	Post test	Dif.	Sig.
ASC Program	22	5.3	5.6	+.3	.01
Bellevue ASC	18	5.2	5.6	+.4	.01
Harambee ASC	4	5.7	5.7	_	NS

TABLE 4

Comparison of MAT Mean Problem Solving Grade Equivalent Scores, by Program and by Center

School Year 1973-1974

Team	N	Pre test	Post test	Dif.	Sig.
ASC Program	15	4.8	4.9	+.1	NS
Bellevue ASC	13	4.8	4.9	+.1	NS
Harambee ASC	4	5.7	5.7	-	NS

An examination of the preceding MAT test data, which was collected in the fall and spring of the school year, reveals several pieces of information:

1. For each ASC, and for the program as a whole, gains of five to six months were reported on the Word Knowledge subtest. While these gains did not meet the established standard for either the centers or for the program as a whole, changes were statistically significant and at the .05 level.
2. On the total Reading subtest score, both programs and Harambee ASC changes were minimal with neither changes being statistically significant. At Bellevue, however, a 5-month gain significant at the .01 level was reported.
3. On the arithmetic computation subtest, the Bellevue ASC and the program as a whole reported mean gains which were significant at the .01 level. No mean score changes could be reported for the Harambee ASC.
4. On the Problem Solving subtest, non-significant changes were reported. Note that on this subtest the overall number of youngsters who were tested was minimal (N=15).

In addition to the use of MAT criterion, the Bellevue ASC also used both the Word Recognition and Comprehension sub-scores of the Reading Diagnostic Scale as alternative measures. These data are reported in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Comparison Of Reading Diagnostic Skill Mean Word Recognition Scores

School Year 1973-1974

Sub-test	N	Pre test	Post test	Dif.	Sig.
Word Recognition	21	4.2	5.2	+1.0	.01
Comprehension	21	4.1	4.8	+ .7	.01

On the word recognition subtest a mean gain of .6 was recorded and on the comprehension subtest the recorded gain was 1.1; both changes were significant at the .01 level.

Although the Reading Diagnostic scale had not been specified as a measurement criterion, on this instrument the stated level of gain was achieved at the Bellevue ASC. And since the comprehension score was particularly high in contrast to the other MAT scores which were reported, it would seem appropriate to make further comparisons of this instrument with the MAT so as made to determine which of these two is a more suitable criterion.

Question - Did ASC students demonstrate improved attendance figures over the year? While comparisons were to be made with secondary school attendance figures and with previous student patterns of attendance, no data were submitted. Since no information was available, the attainment of this objective cannot be made.

Question - Did ASC students, as a group, demonstrate substantially improved self-image and a more positive attitude toward others and toward their learning situation? No data were submitted.

Summary and Conclusions

On the basis of the preceding data, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the accomplishments of the Alternate Secondary Centers during the 1973-1974 school year. These conclusions, of course, are limited to some extent by the nature of the data which were collected; hence these conclusions relate only to the stated objectives and do not purport to cover other aspects of the program which were not examined.

1. On the basis of MAT test criteria, it would appear that the stated objective of month-for-month reading gains was not accomplished. At the same time, the levels of word knowledge gain which was evidenced by both ASC's, and of Reading growth which was achieved by the Bellevue ASC were quite salutary. Since this group of youngsters had been unable to function in

the mainstream, gains of 5 to 6 months might well be considered excellent progress under the present circumstances.

2. In terms of mathematics growth, the Bellevue ASC reported mean computation gains which were significant at the .01 level, although both teams produced minimal changes in problem solving All but the former gains were below the expected standard. Parenthetically, at Harambee, the number of youngsters for whom pre and post data were submitted ranged between 4 and 7. This low number of test scores presented insufficient evidence upon which to base evaluative conclusions. It is recommended that more attention be given to the collection of test data in this Center during the coming year.

3. As was pointed out by the director and staff, linkages between alternate programs, flexibility in transfers and returns to the mainstream, and assimilation problems were in evidence. Here the director has indicated that efforts are being made to improve this situation.

4. No information regarding attendance nor self-concept was reported. Both of these variables should be examined closely during the coming year.

Evaluation Office
September 1974

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Date August 29, 1974

1973-74 SADC - TITLE I ESEA PROJECT EVALUATION

Town Hartford

Prgm Director Elbert Terry

Address 249 High Street

Prgm Evaluator Robert Nearine

Program Title Alternate Secondary Centers

Period of Program:
(x) sch yr only
( ) summer only
( ) sch yr & sum

Program length in weeks 36

Project Number: 64-2 Component 19

Program Funds:
SADC: $
Title I: $ 258,925.00
_____: $
(Specify any other)

1. Program Participants

Total public school pupils 100

Total nonpublic school pupils -

2. Schools where programs took place:

358 Bellevue Street and 44 Niles Street

Grade level breakdown for all pupils served:

Pk	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Other
								7	32	29	16	7	4	5

3. Economic and educational criteria used to select pupils for services of the program: Concurrent variables of underachievement, continual disciplinary infractions, and several indicies of potential dropout proneness are used as as the basis for the gross screening of potential candidates.

4. Number and type of staff to whom SADC or Title I funds were paid: 1 Assistant Supervisor, 2 Unit Leaders, 10 Teachers, 1 Social Worker, 1 Guidance Counselor, 2 Clerical and 2 Paraprofessionals.

5. Principal objectives related to pupils' achievement and attitudes:

See Narrative

6. Description of program activities and services:

See Narrative

7. Evaluation of the principal goals of the program, measures used, results, and an interpretation of what the results mean.

See Narrative

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8. Title I funds are provided to serve children from low-income areas regardless of whether they attend public or private schools. If children going to nonpublic schools resided in the school attendance areas validated for Title I, ESEA services in your community, provide the following:

   a. Where Title I services were rendered, indicate the number of children and the name(s) of the nonpublic schools they attended.

   None

   b. Describe the specific services nonpublic school children received.

   c. Indicate the dollar amount of Title I, ESEA funds used for the above services.

9. Aside from the evaluation made of program objectives, indicate any <u>successful outcomes</u> resulting from Title I or SADC efforts in the town during the past year.

   See narrative

10. Aside from the evaluation made of program objectives, indicate any <u>problems</u> resulting from Title I or SADC efforts in the town during the past year.

    See narrative

11. State the <u>recommendations</u> for the future consideration of the programs. Base the recommendations on the findings and conclusions of this evaluation report.

    See narrative

12. Report the standardized test results for program pupils on the following pages. Report results so that pre- and post-test scores are for the <u>same</u> pupils. Report results for only those pupils who were administered the appropriate levels of the test for the pupil's school grade placement.

    The test results are organized to help in a statewide analysis of SADC and Title I. Report scores for a single subtest in reading, math, or language where these are related to the program being offered. Note that group scores have been requested for specific grade levels only on page 4, while page 5 has been organized for all other test information which cannot be included on page 4.

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STANDARDIZED TEST INFORMATION FOR READING, MATH, AND LANGUAGE

Town Hartford Proj. # 64-2 Type Program

Component 19

Gr Lvl for Group Scores	Test Instrument Information: Name of Test and Year Published	Name of Subtest	Pre & Post Test Lvls	Pre & Post Test Forms	No. of Pupils Tested	Raw Scores and Grade Equivalence: Time of Pre Test*	Mean Scores r.s. / g.e.	Time of Post Test*	Mean Scores r.s. / g.e.
Reading									
Gr 1			/	/			/		/
Gr 2			/	/			/		/
Gr 3			/	/			/		/
Gr 4			/	/			/		/
Gr 5			/	/			/		/
Gr 6			/	/			/		/
Ungraded Gr 7	MAT 58	WK Rdg.	INT / INT	AM / BM	23 / 24	7-12.1	5.1 / 4.6	7-12.8	5.6 / 4.8
Gr 8			/	/			/		/
Math									
Gr 1			/	/			/		/
Gr 2			/	/			/		/
Gr 3			/	/			/		/
Gr 4			/	/			/		/
Gr 5			/	/			/		/
Gr 6			/	/			/		/
Ungraded Gr 7	MAT 58	AC PC	INT / INT	AM / BM	22 / 15	7-12.1	5.3 / 4.8	7-12.8	5.6 / 4.9
Gr 8			/	/			/		/

Language					CA at Pre Test	Mean Scores r.s. / MA	CA at Post Test	Mean Scores r.s. / MA
Pk		/	/			/		/
K		/	/			/		/

*Record date of testing in grade equivalent units. If the pretest is between September 15 and October 14 for fourth graders, record it as 4.1, for example. If the post-test is between May 15 and June 14, record it as 4.9. If during other months, use the same rationale.

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STANDARDIZED TEST INFORMATION
NOT INCLUDED ON PRECEDING PAGE

Town Hartford Proj. # 64-2 Type Program
Component 19

Test Instrument Information					Raw Scores and Grade Equivalence				For Test Info Where G.E. Scores Are Not Available			
Gr Lvl for Group Scores	Name of Test and Year Published / Name of Subtest	Pre & Post Test Lvls	Pre & Post Test Forms	No. of Pupils Tested	Time of Pre Test*	Mean Scores r.s. / g.e.	Time of Post Test*	Mean Scores r.s. / g.e.				
	See page 14											

*Record date of testing in grade equivalent units. If the pre-test is between September 15 and October 14 for fourth graders, record it as 4.1, for example. If the post-test is between May 15 and June 14, record it as 4.9. If during other months, use the same rationale.

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1973-74 SADC - TITLE I INDIVIDUAL PUPIL INFORMATION FORM

1. Responding SADC-Title I person: Elbert Terry 2. School: Bellevue

3. Compensatory program title: ASC 4. Town: Hartford

5. Number of pupils receiving compensatory help from you in 1973-74: 50

6. Hours per week of compensatory help provided by you in 1973-74: 35

7. Number of weeks of compensatory help provided by you in 1973-74: 36

8. Cost of the 1973-74 compensatory help you provided: ----

9. Provide information below for a sample of the pupils who received compensatory help from you in 1973-74 (see instructions on the next page).

Pupil Symbol	Gr Lvl	Name of Test and Yr, Pub.	Subtest for Which RAW SCORES Are Provided	Pre & Post Test Lvls	Pre & Post Test Forms	Time of Pre Test*	Pre Test Raw Score		Time of Post Test*	Post Test Raw Score		School Sentiment Index Lvl	School Sentiment Index Total Score
57	7	MAT '58	WK	Int.	AM BM	7.1	3.5		7.9	4.2			
58	8	"	"	"	"	8.1	3.8		8.9	4.5			
59	8	"	"	"	"	8.1	3.7		8.9	3.4			
60	8	"	"	"	"	8.1	4.9		8.9	5.3			
61	8	"	"	"	"	8.1	5.5		8.9	6.8			
62	8	"	"	"	"	8.1	2.8		8.9	2.8			
63	8	"	"	"	"	8.1	5.1		8.9	7.9			
64	8	"	"	"	"	8.1	3.2		8.9	3.6			
65	8	"	"	"	"	8.1	5.1		8.9	6.2			
66	9	"	"	"	"	9.1	3.3		9.9	3.4			
67	8	"	"	"	"	8.1	3.2		8.9	3.1			
68	8	"	"	"	"	8.1	3.3		8.9	3.7			
69	9	"	"	"	"	9.1	3.3		9.9	4.5			
70	12	"	"	"	"	12.1	8.4		12.9	8.0			
71	9	"	"	"	"	9.1	3.8		9.9	5.1			

*Record date of testing in grade equivalent units. If the pretest is between September 15 and October 14 for fourth graders, record it as 4.1, for example. If the post-test is between May 15 and June 14, record it as 4.9. If during other months, use the same rationale.